EXPLORATION OF SUSTAINABLE, CULTURAL, THEOLOGICAL AND VALUE BASED TENETS IN THE MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS OF SAINT MIRABAI

Synopsis

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In

Music

Submitted by

Hritika Samarath

Prof. Shailendra Kumar Goswami
Co-Supervisor
Faculty of Music & Fine Arts
Delhi University of Delhi- 11007
Department of Music

Prof. Lovely Sharma
Supervisor

Department of Music, Faculty of Arts
Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed to be University)
Dayalbagh, Agra - 282005

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INTRODUCTION

The legendary saint-poetess Mira Bai, who lived in 16th-century India, is known for her great devotion to Lord Krishna and her prodigious contributions to Bhakti literature. Her musical creations are both a reflection of her spiritual development and a rich synthesis of cultural, theological and value-based principles.

She was a Rajput princess who became greatly involved in her religious devotion for Lord Krishna. Considered a pronounced saintess of India, her outflow of this Krishna love touched the hearts of millions of people.

Mira Bai's works are firmly founded in a sustainable parameters that places an emphasis on harmony with the natural world. Her poetry frequently conjures up images from nature.Her poetry raises awareness of the value of sustainable living by promoting a harmonious and respectful relationship with the Earth.Mira Bai's devotion to Lord Krishna serves as an example of a profound spiritual connection to nature and the divine, which may encourage sustainable values. Mira Bai led a simple life, prioritizing her spiritual goals over worldly goods. This minimalism and reduced consumption are in sync with sustainable living concepts. Many of her compositions honor the splendor of nature and the environment.

Meera Bai advocated and protected cultural traditions and values through her poetry, highlighting the significance of preserving one's cultural roots for long-term cultural continuation.Mira Bai's musical works are a priceless repository of Rajasthani cultural expressions from the 16th century. Her lyrics are infused with the regional dialect of Hindi called Braj, which permits a close and personal connection with the general populace. Additionally, she frequently incorporates elements of Indian mythology, folklore and customs into her works protecting and promoting traditional narratives. Meera Bai's poems and songs united communities by establishing a sense of harmony and common cultural values, which can aid in the long-term growth of a community.

Deep religious insight based in the Bhakti movement is at the heart of Mira Bai's musical creations. She elaborates on the concept of "Bhakti," or devotion, highlighting a unique and unbreakable bond between the human soul and the Divine. Her words are infused with theological principles of love, submission and the search of divine unity, providing enlightened people with a road to a deep

communion with God.

Her poetry promotes values that are common to all people like love, compassion, humility and unshakeable faith. She promotes a sense of inner transformation and spiritual elevation through her words, motivating people to reject society standards and embrace a higher moral and ethical standard. She was devoted to all living things, embodying a lasting morality of empathy and regard for all species. By boldly professing her love and breaking gender conventions, Mira Bai pushed the boundaries of her time's social norms. Her example inspires continued advancement in the direction of empowerment and gender equality.

Mira Bai's teachings place a strong emphasis on peace and nonviolence, values that are consistent with long-term initiatives to advance social harmony and harmony with the natural world.

Saint Mira Bai composed many bhajans some of which were sung by eminent artists. *Chala vahi des* by Lata Mangeshkar, *baso more nainan me* by MS Subbulakshmi, *Main saanware rang rachi* by Pandit Jasraj, *Saanson ki maala mein* by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, *Pag ghunghroo baandh* by Kishori Amonokar, *Aisi lagi lagan* by Anoop Jalota, etc are some of her popular bhajans. Scholars believe that the songs/poems composed by Mirabai were in Marwari, Gujarati and Braj Bhasha languages. This is the territorial languages spoken in the province in which Mirabai lived.These composition will also be analyzed by the researcher.

The sustainable cultural tenets of Mira Bai can be incorporated into contemporary activities to help cultivate mindfulness, compassion, togetherness and harmony as well as a more sustainable and culturally diverse world.

Researcher has reviewed the following studies related to the sustainable, theological, cultural, musical and value based tenets to justify the research. The studies have been listed in the table given below:

Table 1: An Overview of Research Literature

S.No.	Year	Name of the Researcher	Topic of Research	Findings
1.	2010	Nancy M. Martin	Mirabai Comes to America: The Translation and Transformation of a Saint	Beyond India, her appeal easily transcends barriers of language, caste, class, religion and culture becoming entrenched in a broader segment of American culture in the latter decades of the 20th century.
2.	1990	Kumkum	Mirabai and the	The study emphasis on the use of

		Sangari	Spiritual Economy of Bhakti	Hinduism's high metaphysics sparingly by liberalizing and dissident kinds of bhakti in an effort to infuse the material world with an excess of transcendent significance.
3.	1992	Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita	Poison to Nectar: The Life of Mirabai	Analyses of her works written in several languages including Hindi, Gujrati,Punjabi,Bhojpuri,Bengali and Oriya. A few were included in the Guru Granth Saheb.
4.	2022	Ritu Varghese & Akshaya K.Rath	Mirabai and the Ethic of Universal Suffering: Reading *Bhajans* in Indian Pedagogy	Numerous translations address the dynamic mechanism of this technique, which is popular in Indian education and greatly influenced by historical interpretations of Mira bhajans.
5.	2002	Amy Carr-Richardson	Feminist and Non-Western Perspectives in the Music Theory Classroom: A Study of John Harbison's "Mirabai Songs"	A study of Mira Bai's compositions provides a chance for extensive multidisciplinary research. There are a number of Mira Bai pieces being played by orchestras all around the world.
6.	2004	Robert Bly	Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems	It is evident from their work that Mirabai's poetry is timeless and cross-cultural. Mira Bai was regarded as a role model for moral purity and societal resistance. Mira Bai was a gifted and devoted individual.
7.	2023	Nancy M Martin	10 Invoking Mirabai	In India, the author saw Mira Bai, who was revered by the Romantics as an idealized representation of the heroic women of ancient Greece and Rome.
8	2023	Ritu Varghese, Akshaya K Rath	Mirabai in public spheres	This paper investigates how Mirabai is viewed as a symbol of resistance in Indian culture as she travels through canonized public recollections. By placing her bhakti and bhajans in the cultural nexus of public-private bargaining, it also tracks the change in how she is seen in different narratives.
9	2016	Pintu Mahakul, Satyanarayan Pathi	Role of Spiritual Poems on Stress Reduction-A Study	This paper examines Mira Bai's principles and life experiences.She understands the joy of inner existence and the reality of the cosmos after reaching the pinnacle of dedication on her spiritual path. As we dig more into Mirabai's life, we see that despite the challenges she experiences and the criticism she receives from her family, she never wavers in her dedication to Lord Krishna.
10	2009	Deborah Lee Donnell	A comparative study of the writings of St	This research compares and contrasts the mystical spirituality of Teresa of Avila and Mirabai of Rajasthan, two women

			Teresa of Avila and Mirabai on their understanding and experience of the path to union with God	who lived in the 16th century. The goal of Mira and Teresa's spirituality is to illuminate the ways that many faiths may interact and learn from one another. It also serves to demonstrate how these women's traditions' transformational potential may spark changes across many generations and geographical locations.
11	2018	C Martinez	The Autobiographical Pose: Life Narrative and Religious Transformation in the Mirabai Tradition	The importance of autobiographical speaking in the tradition is related to the growing focus on Mira as a personification of religious transformation and bhakti as a route of transformation.A growing focus on Mira as a personification of religious transfor mation and bhakti
12	1965	S. M. Pandey and N orman Zide	Mīrābāī and Her Contributions to the Bhakti Movemen	Given her socioeconomic status and gender, Mirabai stood out among the poet-saints of the Bhakti movement. Her brave life may be compared to that of modern women who still must overcome resistance from their families and society in order to lead an autonomous and creative public life, making her life incredibly relevant today.
13.	2014	H Hillgardner	Between and Beyond Canons: Mirabai and Hadewijch in Relation to Scripture and the Self	A bhakta from the fifteenth century named Mirabai sang fervent poems about her longing for God. She used the viraha-bhakti literary form—a mystical eroticism of desire from the Vaiava tradition—as she pleaded with him to "come and extinguish the fire of separation." Although they differ greatly in terms of customs, distance, and years, Hadewijch and Mirabai may both be considered to use love-longing as their main form of contemplation.
14.	2018	Ray Burbank	Bhajans and Biblical Theology: An Evaluation of the Indigenous Indian Devotional Song Genre's Educational Potential	Ray Burbank examines the history of Indian bhajan songs and how they may be used to impart religious knowledge. He advocates wider use of bhajan as a theological, devotional, and worship practice while taking into consideration the indigenous themes that are present in a handful of Saint Mira Bai's song lyrics.
15.	2023	Jeelima Luthra	The Rana in Mirabai’s poetry and musical adaptation	Mira is portrayed in Rajputized versions as a courageous and heroic lady who upheld the pativrata ideal, a devout wife, a Virangana, and a Virangana. The Rana poems also discuss feudalism, medieval politics, and the empire's control over common people. In sharp contrast, the poems of Rana discuss her rejection of the medieval patriarchal and courtly

				existence.
16.	2008	Barbara Bonous-Smit	John Harbison's 'Mira Bai Songs': Religion, Ritual, Love and Eroticism	. John Harbison was captivated by the Indian poetess Mirabai of the 16th century and her poems (transcribed by Robert Bly). He was particularly taken with the way she merged religion without ritual. He has said that although her responses included the euphoric, the devout, and the creative, her independence, resolve, and dancer's vigor guided my setting toward story and characterization—unusual ground for a song cycle.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Studying the sustainability, cultural, theological, and value-based aspects in the compositions of Mira Bai, helps us understand her poetry's relevance and impact across time. It sheds light on her deep spiritual connection her cultural context and the values she embraced, contributing to a broader appreciation of her work and its significance. There is not much literature available on the raag and taal used in her compositions thus considering the following points there is a need for this form of study and analysis of her literature which can contribute in its sustainability for generations to come.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of sustainability, cultural, theological and value-based compositions of Mira Bai holds several significances.

- By examining sustainability-related themes in her writings we may learn more about how she felt a connection to nature and the environment, which might inform contemporary viewpoints on eco-friendly practices and ecological awareness.
- Mira Bai's compositions offer insights into the historical background, customs, and societal norms of her time by reflecting the cultural and social dynamics of the time. Her works continue to captivate a wide range of audiences globally.Studying them may help people understand and appreciate people from different cultures.
- Her theological works provide deep perceptions into her devotion, spirituality, and particular relationship with the divine.It adds to our knowledge of the Bhakti movement and its influence on Indian philosophy.

- Mira Bai's writings reflect the moral standards, virtues and ethical values that she upheld. They provide lessons and pointers for modern readers who wish to uphold comparable standards.Her publications promote introspection and ethical reflection, urging readers to take stock of their own convictions, principles, and spiritual trajectories.
- Her compositions have influenced a variety of artistic mediums, including music, dance, and literature, demonstrating the continuing influence of her work on artistic expression.

Overall delving into the sustainability, cultural, theological, and value-based dimensions of Mira Bai's compositions enriches our understanding of history, spirituality, and human values, and offers valuable lessons applicable to both historical and contemporary contexts.

DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

The terms used by the researcher in the research is defined in this section:

Exploration

Cambridge Dictionary defines Exploration as "the activity of searching or finding out about something".

Sustainable

According to the definitions from Oxford Languages Sustainability is defined in two ways:

1. Involving the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment.
2. That can continue or being continued for a long time.

Cultural

According to Collins Dictionary the term cultural is defined as the following:

1. Cultural means relating to a particular society and its ideas, customs, and art.
2. Cultural means involving or concerning the arts.

Theological

According to Cambridge Dictionary Theological is defined as relating to the study of religion or religious belief.

Values

Oxford English Dictionary (2014) defines "Values as Principles or Standards of Behaviour;one's judgement of what is important in life."

Value Based Behaviour implies level of Conciousness and Orientation for personal,social,spiritual and moral values(M.Gandhi,2014).

Tenets

Britannica Dictionary defines tenets as " a belief or idea that is very important to a group".

Musical Compositions

Britannica defined it as "the act of conceiving a piece of music, the art of creating music, or the finished product."

Saint

According to Wikipedia "Saint is the designation of a holy person".

AIMS

This research looks into Mira Bai's ecological conscience as expressed in her music, including her adoration of nature and support for sustainable living.Support the spread and preservation of cultural heritage contained in her musical works, clarifying how she understands bhakti and expresses her devotion as well as spiritual experiences.Comprehend the Divine more deeply as expressed in her musical works and her relationship with it. Examine the moral principles of love, compassion, humility and dedication that are embodied in her musical works.Evaluate how these principles are reflected in her music and how they act as standards for moral behavior and spiritual development.

The overarching goals of Mira Bai's musical compositions are to preserve, promote and reinterpret her timeless messages in a way that encourages cultural continuity, spiritual enlightenment, environmental awareness, social justice and a harmonious society. By doing research along these lines, this study seeks to illuminate the depth and significance of Mira Bai's musical works offering insightful knowledge to academics, artists, spiritual searchers, cultural ventures, and those concerned with living sustainably and ethically.

OBJECTIVES

This study seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- Providing environmental and sustainable perspectives in the compositons of Saint Mira Bai.
- To aid in the promotion and preservation of the cultural legacy that is shown in the compositions of Saint Mira Bai.

- Spiritual inquiry and theological understanding:
- Examine Mira Bai's interpretations of Bhakti philosophy, her view of the Divine and how she articulated spiritual experiences in order to dive into the theological foundations of her writing.
- Identify and examine the moral and ethical principles that Mira Bai espouses throughout her works,

  such as love, compassion, humility, and dedication.
- Analyze the compositions that are being sung and presented in today's time.

HYPOTHESIS

Saint Mira Bai's musical works represent lasting cultural, theological, and value-based principles that can encourage environmental awareness, spiritual development and moral behavior fostering a peaceful and integrated society.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

The research will employ descriptive and an interdisciplinary research methodology which will include the components of musicology, cultural studies, theology and sustainable studies in order to investigate the subject of research.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research **– Exploration of Sustainable, Cultural, Theological and Value based Tenets in the Musical Composition of Saint Mirabai** is limited to studying Mirabai and her compositional analysis through various modes. The research is limited to this Bhakti saint only and the focus will be on her impact towards music and society at large.

RESEARCH TOOLS

1 Primary Data Collection would be examined through, a qualitative research method which includes the usage of libraries, literary material and in-depth interviews with professors, artists, and historians.

2 Secondary Data Collection would be collected through books, treatises, magazines, journals, published and unpublished papers, audio-video recordings, etc., from the libraries of various Music

Departments. Online portals would also be used.

3 Libraries:

a) Sangeet Natak Akademi Library(Delhi)

b) Dayalbagh Educational Institute Library(Agra)

c) Faculty of Music and Fine Arts Library(Agra)

d) Indira Gandhi National Centre for Research(Delhi)

e) Banaras Hindu University(Varanasi),

f) Rabindra Bharti University (Kolkatta) etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PLAN

For the research, Exploration of Sustainable, Cultural, Theological and Value Based Tenets in the Musical Composition of Saint Mira Bai the synopsis has been divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1: Study of the Life of Mirabai

Chapter 2: Sustainable parameters of Culture and Mira Bai

Chapter 3: Analysis of the Theological Perspectives of Mirabai's Musical Compositions

Chapter 4: Value based tenets in the Compositions Mira Bai

Chapter 5: Musical Analysis of Mira Bai's Compositions

Conclusion

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